# The Seed Sower.

*A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.*

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## Little Things.

A little star whose twinkling
When half the world's asleep,
Gives widowed woe an inkling
Of better worlds where never mourners weep;

A little prayer unbidden
That hardly bends the knee;
A little child oft chidden
That hath that charm of charms, simplicity;

A little look that lightens
The burden of some back;
A little smile that brightens
The sufferer's path, the lonely, tearful track;

A little sigh of pleasure,
A little tear that starts
When joy o'erflows its measure
And fills with sympathy our brimming hearts;

The little ones that love us,
And lend our spirits wings;
Ah! things that heavenward move us
Are not the august and grand, but little things.

ROBERT WILSON.

"Children," said a good man to the family gathered around his death-bed, "during my long life I have had a great many troubles, most of which never happened."

## "A Little Child shall lead them."

A SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

BY THE REV. EDGAR I. FRIPP, B.A.

In nothing, perhaps, does the Calvinistic theology differ so fundamentally from the teaching of Christ as in its estimate of childhood. Calvinism declares that children are born evil and have to be delivered from original sin by the training of elders and the efficacy of the church; whereas Christ taught us that they are born good, but grow evil largely because of their sinful surroundings. Calvinism treats the young as if they were by nature against goodness and in constant need of correction and chastisement; but Christ looked upon them as naturally on the side of goodness and in continual need of not being misled. Calvinism is anxious to fill the children's minds with saving doctrine; whereas Christ sent the apostles to the children to learn from them something better than creeds. Calvinism is eager to tell a child it has a soul; but Christ's chief aim would be that when the child found its soul it should be a noble and sacred discovery.

Now it is a matter of congratulation, and a sign of hope and grace among us, that we are coming more and more to the truth of Jesus Christ. Even in the most orthodox churches it is recognised that the children, with their safe

instincts, their natural sensibility to good, their fresh, bright outlook on the world, their directness and simplicity, their quick response to our love, are in many ways our teachers, and a continual protest against the indifference and affectation of society.

I have a little book written by Dr. Daniel Williams, and published by his wish on his death, in 1727, entitled "The Vanity of Childhood and Youth, wherein the depraved nature of young people is represented and means for their reformation proposed." It is the more interesting, in the present connection, because the author was one of our English non-subscribing forefathers and founder of Dr. Williams' Library in London. The low view of childhood and youth here expressed by one who was regarded in his day as a liberal and heretical theologian, enables us to realise the advance that has taken place since his time. Dr. Williams' opinion of young people, whatever their faults, would simply not be tolerated in our churches to-day, and would find, I think, little acceptance anywhere.

The change is very great. We may see it in art and literature, as well as in theology.

In 1727, for instance, the great painter of English manners and morals, William Hogarth, was just commencing his career. Childhood in his pictures is very pathetic. His boys and girls are pitiful little creatures, ill brought-up, deformed in body and mind. We see them crying and quarrelling, gambling, stealing, tormenting animals, prurient and ready to pick up evil wherever it is to be found. Yet Hogarth was an earnest man, who, like his contemporary Swift, represented a feeling in the nation of its cruelty and a desire for better things. During the eighteenth century there was a steady improvement, especially owing to the work of the Wesleys, and men like John Howard and John Pounds. In the paintings of Morland and the engravings of Bewick, who may be taken as typical artists of the school which followed Hogarth, childhood is still ragged and dirty and mischievous, but not depraved and repulsive as in his satire. Gainsborough and Reynolds were the first of our painters to give children their due—though mostly among the upper classes. Such pictures as Gainsborough's "Blue Boy," and Reynolds' "Simplicity," "Innocence," "Angel Faces," and "Child Samuel," are significant of the change of sentiment in the last quarter of the century. Later, Collins and Wilkie, Webster and Mulready, shewed the loveableness of childhood in the homes of the poor; and again later, in our own time, Millais and the "pre-Raphaelites," and the women painters—Mrs. Allingham and Kate Greenaway and Dorothy Tennant and others,—have raised child-life to the very highest level among subjects of art, and done as much as the preachers to banish the gloomy and false views of orthodoxy.

In literature we may recognise the same change. Goldsmith in prose and Burns in verse were practically the earliest in modern times to write with feeling and insight about children. In all Pope's voluminous poetry and Fielding's novels I cannot remember a single description of child-life. Until Goldsmith and Burns the subject was apparently considered trivial. But these men initiated a new era. They were followed by Cowper and Scott, Coleridge and Wordsworth; and after them have come, in our own day, Dickens and Tennyson, and a host of women-writers, such as "George Eliot," Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Burnett, and others, who have increased our love for boys and girls. Did George Eliot ever write anything truer or more beautiful than "Silas Marner?" It is the story of a weaver who, cruelly wronged, left his native town and went to live in a lonely cottage by himself. There for many years he brooded over his injury, hating man and God, working and hoarding his savings, until he grew into a half-crazy old miser. One evening, while he was out, a thief entered his house and carried off his hoard, and drove him nearly to madness. But shortly afterwards, on returning home, he found on his hearth before the fire not, as he for the moment thought, his bag of gold, but the golden hair of a little girl, who had crept through the door from the snow. Then gradually his loss is made good, and more than made good, by his gain. By love and care for the little foundling he learns—the secret of life—to forget himself, and is slowly brought back to reason, to the companionship of his fellowmen, and to the worship of God. It is a powerful sermon on the text, from Wordsworth, set on the title-page :—

"A child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer
Brings hope with it and forward-looking thoughts."

Contemporary with this alteration of feeling in theology, art, and literature, is the change in education, in social life, in philanthropy and politics. We are all coming to see that, in the children at any rate, in spite of hereditary tendencies, evil is distortion rather than natural depravity, that the child-nature is essentially good and beautiful. We are putting away the stick, for instance, and trusting in kindness. We have a distrust, on the other hand, of mere gifts and prizes. The kinder-garten system is taking the place of the old method, reward and punishment. And we are discovering, with the rapid extension of the means and the right spirit of child-training, that few taxes are so profitable as those for the education of the young. It is easy, I know, to put one's hand on the faults of the scholar in the Board and National Schools; but if we consider what the modern boy and girl would be in our great cities *without* these schools, I think the most reactionary old Tory would hardly like to see them done away with. If the modern scholar is sharp rather than thoughtful, and impudent sometimes instead of reverent, it is a call to us *to do more, not less, for him*, and, if need be, to double our school-rate instead of halving it. It is wisdom, I think, to feel that we cannot do too much for the children. If, face to face with social evils, we are sometimes tempted to despair of men and women, despair of lifting them out of their drunken, ignorant, and brutal condition, we may comfort ourselves with the thought that we can at any rate get at the young and bring them under higher influences. The first of all social problems is that of the children,—of bringing them into the world, of housing and feeding and clothing them, of bringing them up fit for the work and duties of modern industrial life. And we may be certain that only as our reformers and statesmen make this problem the chief object of their endeavour will they accomplish any permanent good. Behind and underneath the many difficult questions as to the future of South Africa is that of educating the young people of two hostile and embittered races to tolerate and respect one another, and to blend their respective qualities in the conversion of a savage wilderness into a fruitful field.

In our homes especially the little child leads, and from him we learn the principles which will turn the world at last into a great household. There is nothing like the children to break in upon our domestic selfishness and show us a more excellent way. A bachelor wedded to his orderly habits and creature comforts has, one day, to find room in his well-kept house for the little orphan son of a spendthrift brother. At first it goes against the grain. He does not think it fair. He grumbles at having to submit to an imposition. But by degrees he settles down to it, puts up with its inconveniences, and discovers that it is not altogether a bad thing to have a youngster running about. He takes a new interest in the rising generation, and thence draws closer to life in general, and benefits in unexpected ways by contact with the world. Or take the case of a grandmother who suddenly has her daughter's child thrown on her care. She finds that she has not yet done with life. On the contrary, she lives her motherhood over again, and is capable of work and thought and happiness which she feared had gone from her. So the little child leads.

Again, the birth of their first child often reveals a new character in man and wife. It does much sometimes for the woman, but I think it does even more for the man. It awakens his earnestness, and turns his thoughts to religion, and both of them it builds together in a closer union of love. Even if their little one be taken from them, their souls are more strongly knit together. They were more to each other by the child's coming; and they are still more to one another by its death. A little mound in the graveyard and a child with God make life a deeper thing between them. You remember Tennyson's little poem—

"As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out my wife and I,
O we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.
And blessings on the falling-out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears."

In more ways than one children are peace-makers. They unite sects, parties, and classes. Neighbours often look askance at one another until their children play together. Protestant holds aloof from Catholic, Churchman from Dissenter, Conservative from Radical, professional man from tradesman, tradesman from artisan, until the young people by their friendship break down the separating barriers. Montague and Capulet are enemies until Romeo and Juliet by their love and death destroy the feud. The rich and poor live apart in our great cities, dwelling in different localities; they are often rather suspicious of each other, and inclined to regard one another as the source of social trouble and danger. But the children unite them. The Sunday School, the Band of Hope, the sewing class, the cricket club, the children's hospital, open spaces, country holiday funds bring the wealthy to the homes of the poor, and to a knowledge of their needs and deservings, and at the same time reveal to the poor the kindness of the rich.

In still other ways the little child leads. I know that it is easy to be sentimental about childhood, and it must be confessed that a great deal has been written which is mawkish and false. Yet in a deep sense it is true that wisdom cometh out of the mouth of the babes of this world. The child is wiser than the man to the extent always that simple, direct, out-spoken speech, and innocent, plain questioning are better than the secrecy, the reticence, the diplomacy, and the evasion of a timid experience. The remarks and inquiries of the children frequently bring us to nature and common-sense. Hans Andersen, who has a high place among lovers and teachers of children, illustrates this with fine satiric humour, in his tale of the "Emperor's New Clothes." The emperor orders a new and gorgeous suit, and for weeks there are measurings and cuttings and fittings on. At last he appears in his new attire before his subjects. "Beautiful," said the flattering old courtier; "beautiful," said statesmen and bishops; "beautiful," said the people, in imitation of their betters; until at last a child turned to its mother and said, "Mammy, he has nothing on." "Hush, how dare you," cried its elders; but it was whispered that the child was right, and then the whisper grew louder and louder, and at length the falsehood was laughed out of court. How true this is! There is scarcely any untruth, any superstition, any ridiculous fashion, law or institution, as history proves, which men may not find it their interest to accept and even persuade themselves that they honestly believe and support with learning and eloquence and zeal, until the child voice speaks, and a whisper spreads through the land, and becomes a great national declaration. And not only kings, but I am afraid most of us, are liable to be flattered or persuaded into thinking that we have, or are, or have done something admirable when, if the truth were known, we should find ourselves rather naked. Even in these days the people who have means and culture, or anything that tempts them to think they are important, are rarely the movers. New truth, new progress, generally come from those who are not thought much of, and, in comparison with others, might be called "babes." Almost every great reform I can remember, commenced in this way. Francis of Assisi, Wiclif, Luther, Cromwell, Wesley, Cobden, Lloyd Garrison, Henry George, Tolstoy, among a host of others, are the great children of humanity, who have spoken the true word, and sent a living message fraught with far-reaching influence and unknown issues into the world. Indeed, is there not something child-like, something strangely lowly and simple in all very great men? In our King Alfred and the French St. Louis, in Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Giotto, Newton, Darwin, and in all the noblest workers of Christendom, from our own time to St. Paul and the Great Founder of Christianity himself? Shakespeare's teaching, which began in inn-yards and barns, has been summed up by one of his best interpreters in the three brief sentences: "Love God; love your neighbour; do your work." And the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which took root first among peasants and fishermen, is a religion for the young as well as for the old, and for the ignorant as well as the educated. Though the deepest philosophy cannot reach to the end of it, and its simplest beliefs are also profoundly mysterious, it is a faith for children. *You*, boys and girls, and young people, may know the essence of it. God is a mystery, the soul is a mystery, life itself is a mystery, the creation is a mystery, to exist at all is a mystery, duty is a mystery,

forgiveness is a mystery, the peace of a good conscience is a mystery, the desire for perfection and the yearning for a future life are mysteries; and the greatest thinkers in the world will never know all that these things mean. But all that they need to know may be known by *you*. God is your Father. You are born of Him and bound up with Him. There is something God-like and beyond the understanding in your nature. God loves you, and His love is *in* you. He loves you far more than you love one another, and as His love grows in you, you will love one another more. You are all brothers and sisters, and the world is one great home. The joy or sadness, the goodness or the evil of one is more or less that of all the rest, and a credit or a shame to the whole. Because you are God's children sin is a terrible and wicked thing; but because God is your Father, in sorrow and penitence you may feel the blessing and the peace of being forgiven. God listens to your prayers, and answers them by entering into you and giving you of Himself, strengthening you against temptation, encouraging you in the face of danger, softening and purifying your heart, making your pain less painful and your joy more joyous, and invigorating and exalting every one of your faculties. And as you live in the knowledge of the Eternal Goodness and draw continually from it, and feel that there is something within you and your fellow men which is worthy to live, you will believe more and more in the life to come.

You can all understand this teaching, which was spoken to the unlearned by one who called himself the Child of Man, and was named by others the Child of God, and who, uniting in himself the beauty of earth and heaven, helped others to blend in their lives the human and the divine. May you believe in it now in the days of your childhood and youth, and may you believe in it still in the times of manhood and old age!

There is nothing better to take with us into life than the influence of a happy and devout upbringing. The struggle and heroism of work have to follow the innocence and quiet of home, and, as in Milton's poem, we go forth from Eden with a knowledge of evil to discover through love and duty a Paradise within us "greater far;" but we are not fully prepared for the battle unless we carry away from our boyhood or girlhood a mind stored with beautiful and gracious memories. We cannot be complete men or women if we have not been children with a sense of the blessings of home and the sacredness of the world, and if we are not sent forth into life with a treasury of love from which we may gather strength to go forward.

May this child-part of us never die! May it remain with us and lead us to the end. Knowledge, experience, years are no substitute; nor indeed are they worth anything unless they add to this early piety and enable us to stand always as little children in the presence of our Father.

## The Keeper of the Lilies.

*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

I was very busy painting a text with a border of lilies round it, and being tired after a hard day's work, I fell asleep. I dreamed there was once an old man who had spent his whole life in acquiring learning. He knew all the languages that were ever spoken, and all the sciences that were ever thought of. He understood why the stars went round in their orbits, and why the seasons came and departed. He had studied the opening of the flowers, and the pine forests and the great mountains were no mystery to him. He had read all books except one, but he had never looked into the heart of a child. That was a book he had not opened, and the writing on its fair white leaves contained secrets of which he did not even dream. He had knowledge of all the world besides, and he found no God therein, for his eyes were holden.

And at last he became very weary, and looking out upon the universe, he asked of it, "What is thy meaning? Where shall I find God? I find Him not in the stars or upon the earth."

And he was sad, and his years pressed heavily upon him. So he wandered forth upon a long journey, leaving his books and his possessions and his scientific instruments behind him, seeking he scarcely knew what, but dimly hoping that before he died he might somewhere find the soul of the world, and lay his tired heart against it and rest. And as he travelled on his hope grew fainter, but in its stead there came a longing, and the longing strengthened. But time passed over his head and thinned his white locks, and he was more than ever weary, and more than ever sad, and he was very old. At length, when his footsteps were feeble and he leaned upon a staff, he came to a green land with many hills and streams and pleasant meadows, when the sunshine was warm, and the sky very blue. He sat down upon a fallen tree, and said, "Here let me remain, for I can go no further." Then he raised his eyes, and saw quite near to him a white building, square and grand and simple, rising into the pure air, with many trees gathered about it, and at its foot beds of white flowers. He sat gazing at it for a long while, and

as he gazed a bell began to toll very slowly, and with a deep, solemn tone; yet it seemed that its note was one of joy.

The grave, sweet music sent fresh strength into his feeble limbs, and he rose and went towards the building, wondering if it was a temple. When he came quite close, at an angle of the wall, he saw a border of tall lilies growing, with their straight stems and snowy blossoms. There were daisies also among their roots.

A little boy with fair hair was kneeling by the side of the flower-border, busy with his hands about the earth, pulling up weeds. The old man paused at his side. "Thou workest here very hard," he said. The boy looked up. He had dark blue eyes and a little sweetly-smiling mouth, and there was something in his face that made the old man call to mind his own far-off childhood, and wonder why he had not communed with youth and innocence before.

"Nay, this is not hard work," answered the boy. "I love it. I am the keeper of the lilies."

"Why do they grow here?" asked the old man.

"They sweeten the air, and make those letters bright," said the child, pointing to some words written in large letters upon the wall. "The gold always glows like that in the sunshine when my lilies blossom well. I love my lilies," and he bent down and touched them with his lips.

Then the old man felt his yearning grow stronger within him, and he looked at the letters and tried to read them. He had mastered all languages, but he found it hard to read those words. At last he spelt them out slowly—"For they shall see." The next word puzzled him for a while; then he read—"For they shall see God."

"Ah, who are they?" he asked himself aloud, with a heavy sigh. "I have never seen Him yet."

The boy gave him a grave upward look, and then stooped to his lilies once more. The old man moved round the angle of the building, and there he read at once without any difficulty, "Blessed are the pure in heart." And the old man pondered awhile, and afterwards he returned to the boy and said, "Art thou one of those?"

The child stood up and looked at him with a serious sweetness of face.

"Yea," he answered; "I wear my white garment, and I tend my lilies, and I sing in the Temple of Purity, but the promise has not yet been kept to me. I have done my work too ill, perhaps, but I know that some day soon—may be to-day——." A smile spread and lightened his eyes. The old man gazed at him and wondered.

"Come," said the child, "let us go into the Temple. Thou mayest have some lilies to carry. We always take lilies when we enter the Temple." He plucked several of the tall heads of flowers, gave some to the old wanderer, and held the rest. Then he led the way to the door. It was all of white marble, gleaming in the sunshine. They passed inside. It was a high square hall, with one great window at the side, and it was full of light, and snow-white. It was very simple, with two rows of smooth columns holding up the roof, and the roof was white, with a border of large lilies sculptured round it. There was an altar at one end, piled high with lilies and other white flowers, and child-priests, like the old man's guide, passed in and out among the pillars and over the marble floor, bearing garlands and crowns with which they were adorning the Temple. As they moved they sang low chants, which mingled with the tolling of the bell.

The old man and the child went to the altar and laid their flowers on it. A new hope was dawning in the old man's heart. He began to feel again the spirit of his earliest youth, as he looked about at the pure faces, and little forms clad in white garments, and the abundant blossoms, and the beauty of everything.

Then the child took his hand and led him to a door, and through it to a stairway, and so up and up, with the sound of the bell growing ever louder and louder over their heads. There was a strange look on the child's face. He did not speak, but a glad light had come into his eyes, and his feet mounted eagerly higher and higher. Just as they came to where the great bell itself hung, it ceased to toll, and hung there quivering. The boy put up his hand and touched it, and the old man did likewise and felt its strong vibrations going through and through him. And there was a window, and outside they beheld the sunshine, and miles and miles of a far-stretching land beneath the blue heavens. And they were lifted high above earth.

Then the child loosed hold of the old man's hand, and he sat down, and the old man sat by his side. Then said the boy, "Turn from the window and close thine eyes, for it may be soon thou shalt see a great light, too fierce for thee to bear." And he turned away and covered his eyes. Then it was as though a darker darkness came over him, and he waited in fear, and there was a silence. And as he waited old words came back to him as from a vast distance, "For in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." The face of the Father—the face of God—it was what of all things he most desired to see. He grew in longing, and he grew in courage. Slowly, slowly he turned and raised his head and opened his eyes. He saw nothing but what was as before.

"Ah, I am too old, and I have left my seeking too late," he sighed. "The pure in heart—they only." He looked towards his child companion to see whether perchance the little ones were still disappointed of the blessed vision. Then a great joy rushed upon him. The white-clad boy was there; his hands were clasped, his wide, wondering eyes upturned, his lips parted, and on his face was the Light that never was on sea or land—the Light he had spoken of—a Light which could be no other than the reflection from "the face of the Father." The radiant joy of his young, pure countenance bathed in that Light gave to the old wanderer the vision that he had been seeking and yearning for. He had journeyed the world over, but it was the child's heart that showed him the truth no philosophy could teach him.

"I have seen God's face in thine," he cried in an ecstasy of deep joy, and peace settled sweetly over his troubled mind. "I have seen the face of the Father in that of His innocent child." And he sat gazing at the boy.

Then I raised my head, and found that it had been lying on the table upon a half-finished text, and there I

read the words—"Blessed are the pure in heart," and in larger letters, "For they shall see God." I sat thinking over my strange dream for quite a long while.

THEODORA MILLS.

## New Century Meetings.

The multitudinous thunder of London is still in our ears, "with carts and cars and coaches roaring all;" glimpses of marvellous pictures are still before our eyes; a sense of vastness still haunts us, so that we grasped something of Mr. Gladstone's meaning, when standing somewhere near Threadneedle Street, and placing his hand upon an iron stump, he said one might feel there the pulse of the world. In this setting came a week of continuous meetings, strenuous yet never wearying, successful from beginning to end, meetings for business or for pleasure, alike thrilling, brilliant, exhilarating. Who can convey an impression that touched the mind and heart at so many points? The subtle influence of such a Pan-Unitarian, or rather Pan-mundane and Pentecostal gathering is distinctly "not transferable,"—the sense of gain in depth and height and breadth, however lamentably evanescent, is incommunicable. One felt the wisdom of a certain lady's remark, "Ah! if only all our young people could be here." How shall one record the "squandering of unquoted mirth;" how give an idea of the tropical crush at the conversazione; how tell the tale of the Mansion House, with its tables paved with good intentions, containiug doubtless the substance of things hoped for, but only the evidence of things not seen; how convey the sense of exquisite enjoyment of the spacious elegance, the lavish and brilliant hospitality at the princely reception of the Brunners at the Grafton Galleries? But as one grasps the total result culminating in the powerful addresses and speeches of Thursday, the great International Day, one is inclined to say surely, hereafter, the Unitarian workers and thinkers will have a larger horizon for ever before their eyes, surely they will gladly realise with Schiller that—

Im engen Kreis verengert sich der Sinn
Es wächst der Mensch mit seinen grössern Zwecken.

Surely they will take henceforth for their great motto, "*non sibi sed toti.*" Surely as one thinks of the frank and unanimous confessions from North and South, from East and West of oneness in aims and principles, our poor, harassed, footsore, heartsore tribes must begin to realise that they are at last crossing the border line between the arid wilderness and the land flowing with milk and honey, that they are entering the promised land, no longer with the grapes of Eschol as a trophy, no longer cowed before the Nephilim, no longer in our own sight as grasshoppers, still less so in the sight of the Nephilim. The walls of Jericho must have become fairly honeycombed, even worm-eaten by this time, and a little vigorous blowing of trumpets—not our own trumpets, God forbid,—may bring the ancient, whilom, formidable walls to "dusty death." Well the universally admitted success of these New Century Meetings, especially of the International Council, may teach us all to reflect sadly and wisely how much we can contrive to leave undone, if we only set about it in the right way. If now we leave nothing undone, leave no stone unturned, we may find the pearl of great price, and endeavour to set it to adorn and enlighten the New Age—that pearl is a freedom-loving, truth-seeking, love-supported religion, whose doctrines are no longer a mechanical series of impenetrable molecules, but a chemical combination of these into the water of life. Perhaps the branches of our hopes shoot out too far, and too luxuriantly; and the stay-at-homes accustomed to our habit of gashing ourselves, and expecting an elegy or a dirge, may not know what to make of this sudden rhapsody, and the shout of the weary but joyful—"Thalatta, O Thalatta!" or rather of the tried but joyful (like Columbus) "The land! O, the land!"—the New World! the New Reformation! Well, we were told by Philip Wicksteed, explaining Wordsworth, or Wordsworth's Explanations, that in the last analysis Poetry is Duty and Mathematics; so *revenons à nos moutons*, and to the Poetry of Facts, under the patronage of the "pedestrian Muses." There will be some fine pruning of the too luxuriant shoots of that Hardy Annual or Perennial—Hope. Let us thank God and go on. It means more sap and more fruit hereafter. We Unitarians have considerable ballast on board which will keep our ship in a dense element, and save it from using its sails as

wings to fly off with into æthereal space, such as that where Wicksteed thought it might be possible for Jingo and Pro-Boer to join hands over Wordsworth's Poetry and learn war no more. But our rhapsody is due to the "High Calling" of the valiant men and true of the International Council (for the whole meetings were practically an amalgamation), to the spirituality of Stopford Brooke, to the "sweetness and light" of Professor Carpenter, to the vigorous common sense of Armstrong, to the angelic fascination of Dr. Crothers, to the æthereal flights of Wicksteed, to the omnipotent survey of Graham Wallas, to the thrilling solemnity of Tchertkoff, to the solidity of the German and the Dutch, to the grace and elegance of the French, to the uniform excellence of all who took subordinate parts, and by wise restraints, seasoned with salt, made all the concert harmonious. Well, none know so well as the masters "the steep and thorny way to heaven," and I suppose they would each and all confess that they had failed as teachers at this great conference if we did not each and all, with them, renounce "the primrose path of dalliance," study the poetry of "fact," under the guidance of the "pedestrian Muses," and lay to heart the bitter-sweet wisdom of these Muses spoken through the mouth of their great prophet Gœthe—"Wenn wir uns selbst fehlen, fehlt uns doch alles."

E. L. H. THOMAS.


# The Seed Sower.

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BIRMINGHAM.

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## Christianity the Religion of the Incarnation.*

We welcome Dr. Warschauer on his entry into the field of constructive theology. The needs of the Liberal Movement might almost be summed up in the one word—construction. Whether the work be destined to stand or fall the presence of the constructive motive is a hopeful sign.

Such constructive energy as Liberal Christianity now possesses is mainly devoted to the elaboration of new Christologies, and Dr. Warschauer's pamphlet follows the rule. A new scholastic seems to be in preparation, not less various in its forms—and we would add, not less unstable in its results—than that which came to a head in the Nicene Creed. One agreement, however, pervades these new attempts, and that is a large and notable concession to the Agnostics, expressed in the proposition that apart from Christ God is unknowable. By some this unknowableness is made absolute, by Dr. Warschauer it is considered only as the difficulty of the average man.

The aims of the pamphlet are practical rather than philosophical. Abstract theism may be theoreticelly true but it is too hard for the general run of mankind. For them the manifestation of God in Christ is well nigh the only possible form in which the Divine may be seen and believed. God has graciously simplified the problem of Revelation by presenting himself to us through a medium fitted to our comprehension—*i.e.*, through a personal Christ. What wonder that the Liberal Movement fails to bring the world to God when it neglects this Revelation which all men can grasp, and seeks for God by steep ways which none but a few can tread?

If we rightly understand Dr. Warschauer's clearly-written pamphlet his position is as follows: no doubt there is in all men a capacity for the God consciousness—a latent power of knowing God—but the action of it is so obstructed by sin and other causes that in most men the resulting knowledge of God

* Christianity the Religion of the Incarnation. By the Rev. Dr. Warschauer, M.A., Philip Green, Essex Hall.

must needs be next to non-existent. What they require is to see before them one who while having their own nature shall yet have it in the highest and purest form. In him they will see that God whom, if they were holier men, they might see in, or at all events, *for* themselves. This highest and purest exhibition of their own nature is provided in Christ. Exceptional men there are who can dispense with such an aid, but these exceptional men are wrong if they think that others can stand with them on their own level. Further, the proof of such a divine revelation in Christ does not rest on historical evidence. Dr. Wauschauer quotes Mr. Thom, words to show that our belief in it rests in a direct intuition of the Divine in Jesus Christ. Whether Christ actually said "I and the Father are one" does not matter; that he and his Father *were* one we cannot doubt.

We will remark upon this in the first place that the whole argument turns upon the community of nature between Christ and us. All depends on his being man. But Dr. Warschauer assigns to this common nature a very different function according as it appears in Christ or in us. Raised to a high level in *us* (as in those "exceptional men" of whom Dr. Warschauer speaks) the result is that we know God; raised to its highest form in Christ the result is not alone that Christ knows God, but that men know God in Christ. A little thought will show that the author inverts the rôle of subject and object as he passes from the human nature in us to the human nature in Christ.

Secondly, let us take the following sentences as defining the main position. "Our intellectual difficulty in conceiving of the Infinite God is overcome, so far as it can be overcome, by the fact that in Christ God was *personally there*. . . . The infinitude of God has rendered Him incomprehensible to us; but in Christ we see the Divine Nature manifested on a finite scale." For our part we entirely fail to see how the Infinite can "be manifested on the finite scale." The phrase is a flat contradiction in terms, and only lends added obscurity to the puzzle it is intended to solve. As well might I be told that I should understand the infinitude of time by watching the finite movements of the hands of a clock. Infinity is a dangerous term to conjure with; but one thing is clear: the infinite is not expressible in terms of the finite. In short, are we not deceiving ourselves by this idea of a mediated knowledge of God? Does the mediation of the knowledge make it easier to attain? Whether I know God in Christ, or whether I know Him apart from Christ, it is God that I know in either case, and whatever difficulties attach to the one form of knowledge will attach to the other. You say I cannot know the infinite. Does God then cease to be infinite when I see him in Christ? Then it is man and not God that I see. Does God retain his infinity when seen in Christ? Then he is equally unknowable in Christ as elsewhere. By selecting a special instrument for the divine revelation you do not change the nature of the object revealed; and if that object is unknowable without the instrument it will be unknowable when conjoined with it.

Reading the pamphlet very carefully we conclude that our dissent from Dr. Warschauer's plea starts from a radically different conception—from an opposite conception—of what the vision of God means. To our thinking the vision of God does not consist in seeing the infinite reduced to the finite scale, but in seeing the finite expanded to an infinite significance. The former of these conceptions is represented in history by the theory of the one God-man, to which the Liberal Movement is essentially opposed. The religious education of the world consists in learning to see all things in their eternal relationships; for which end it is necessary to withdraw the eye of the soul from its concentration on the one divine object and learn the infinite connections of all objects and all thoughts. We have always understood that a chief aim of the Liberal Movement was in this direction, but we are bound to confess that the Christology of Dr. Warschauer impresses us as having the opposite tendency. Dr. Warschauer assures us that the infinitude of God renders Him incomprehensible to us. We on the other hand believe that the knowledge of God consists in the meeting of

the infinite in Him with the infinite in us, in-so-much that all further faith in God, and all more detailed ideas of His attributes rest on our vision of His infinitude. We therefore hold that all attempts to make God comprehensible by contemplating a finite object are bound to fail.

We would venture to ask two questions of those who sympathise with the author of this very interesting pamphlet. Seeing that, according to Dr. Warschauer, exceptional men may "know God," is it so vain a thing to plead with men to raise themselves to the now exceptional level: and is it not wiser to place one's hope for the future of faith in the attainment of soul-levels which are only exceptional so long as we are content with a lower average, than to make accommodations with the present defects of human nature?

And, secondly, is there not better ground for meeting the agnostic than this reassertion of God in Christ? "I cannot know the Infinite," cries the soul. Well, but what is that in you which knows that you cannot know? The eye says to the body—"Yon mountain-top is too high for thee: thou canst not attain to it: it is beyond thy limits: thou art too weak, and it is too steep." But the eye thus declares the impotence of the body only because *itself can see the mountain-top*. Of such nature is agnosticism. An inner eye of the soul has seen the Lord seated on his throne, high and lifted up, and has said to the other faculties: "He is beyond you." Otherwise, how should we know that we cannot know? Now, to our thinking, not the least part of our liberal Gospel is to teach that inner eye to be open, but the Christology of Dr. Warschauer would rather encourage it to close.

Dr. Warschauer supports his conclusions by some striking quotations from Dr. Martineau. These quotations ought to have been dated. In the absence of dates it is impossible to say whether they represent Dr. Martineau's final convictions, or belong to an earlier view which it is well known he discarded in later life.

L. P. Jacks.

## Editorial.

Before the echoes of the "International" meetings have died away, we should like to congratulate all concerned on the remarkable success which attended their labours. As most of our readers will have read the admirable reports of the meetings given in our weekly journals, we content ourselves with Mr. Thomas's striking and picturesque "Impressionist" picture, which will be found on another page. The gatherings on Thursday and Friday were very conspicuous and impressive manifestations of the progress of Liberal religious thought throughout the whole civilised world. They represented a movement pregnant with possibilities for the twentieth century. Those who were privileged to be present were deeply moved. The very atmosphere was electric. For the moment Essex Hall had a religious significance which did not belong to Rome or Canterbury. There were the pioneers of the new theology, the prophets of a real Catholic faith, the forerunners of a new Catholic Church. Although differing from each other on some points, there was a fundamental agreement about the deepest things—the universality of the Divine love, the right of the soul for an open way to God, the supreme importance of ethics, the justification of all who are loyal to the light within them, the divinity of conscience, man's infinite growth towards perfection, the identification of the church with the laity, the authority of reason in the interpretation of sacred books.

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It was most inspiring to hear the same testimony from so many different quarters—to learn of heroic witness borne to truth and freedom by isolated congregations and thinkers throughout the world, and joining with men of all lands and tongues in acts of worship to feel the unity of the spirit amid such diversities of operation. It was a moment of exquisite joy not often vouchsafed in one's brief span of mortal days. And with quickened hearts and renewed consecration men returned to their fields of labour, encouraged by a sense of world-wide fellowship such as they had not known before.

We hope our readers are following with interest Dr. Joseph Parker's audacious and heroic attempt to weld the Congregational *churches* of England and Wales into a single, united Congregational CHURCH. At the Spring Assembly of the Congregational Union Dr. Parker expounded the theory of such a federated church, and he has given notice of a resolution, to be moved at the Autumal Assembly, which will give the theory practical effect. The Congregational journals are filled from week to week with letters of protest, approval, criticism, suggestion, and at present it is impossible to foretell the decision of the Assembly. The matter is of immense interest to us. Dr. Parker is face to face with the great difficulty before which Dr. Martineau's scheme broke down—how to preserve the complete autonomy of the individual congregation when it becomes a branch of one federated church? The delimitation of powers and functions is a knotty problem. We shall follow with keenest watchfulness this new attempt to combine the advantages of the Congregational and the Presbyterian systems in one denomination. If Dr. Parker succeeds, or if he fails, it will be to us an object-lesson of the utmost importance. Questions of organisation are not everything. But as that remark is true of the human body as well as other things, it does not carry us much further. The organisation of the body, while not everything, is, to say the least, a matter of a good deal of interest to the man, and church organisation has a considerable bearing on the effectiveness of religious effort.

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Is it not time that the National Conference strengthened and widened its organisation? After nearly twenty years of vigorous life and most useful action, it is now recognised as the voice and representative of our churches. It has a great deal of work on hand, with the prospect of a great deal more to be undertaken. The time has come when it needs a paid and permanent secretary to watch over its interests and to carry out the plans of its various committees. But this is impossible without an assured and adequate income. The funds have hitherto been supplied by a few generous friends, to whom the treasurer has appealed from time to time. It is felt, however, that the Conference, representing as it does the churches, should look to the churches generally for its financial support. Each church on its roll ought to be a contributor to its funds. If this could be done on some *pro rota* plan, say sixpence per head for each church member, the requisite income could easily be obtained. We believe an appeal will shortly be made to the churches with some such suggestion, and we hope it will receive their most favourable consideration.

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## Children's Drolleries.

The interest shown in the droll doings and amusing observations of little folks, is proved by the success of recent works on the subject. Most of us have some time or another heard children come out with as comical things as any, invented or otherwise, that we see chronicled. Not long since, a correspondent sent to a provincial paper an anecdote of the kind referred to, of which his six-year-old boy was the hero. He says: "I keep a shop, and sell fancy goods. A gentleman came in to buy something. It was early, and my little boy and I were alone in the house at the time. The gentleman gave me a sovereign, and I had to go upstairs to my cash-box. Before doing so, I went into the little room next to the shop and said to the boy, 'Watch the gentleman, that he don't steal anything'; and I put him on the counter. As soon as I returned, he sang out, 'Pa, he didn't steal anything—I watched him.' You may imagine what a position I was in."

Children's questions are often no less embarrassing than they are amusing, as may be instanced in the story of the mercenary little boy who overheard a conversation respecting a wedding that was soon to take place. At breakfast next morning he recalled the subject by asking the following question: "Papa, what do they want to give the bride away for? Can't they sell her?"—A little one returning from the "Zoo" through Regent's Park with a friend of the writer's, pointed to some flowers growing there, and inquired if they were *tame* ones; meaning, of course, with his thoughts on the

animals he had just seen, the reverse of wild.—At a whale exhibition, a youngster is said to have asked his mamma if the whale that swallowed Jonah had as large a mouth as the one before them, why didn't Jonah walk out at one corner.

"You must think Jonah was a fool; he didn't want to walk out and get drowned," was the quick reply of a younger brother, before the mother could answer.

It is related of another infant inquirer who was looking with great interest at a foaming pan of milk, that he suddenly exclaimed, "Mamma, where do cows get the milk from?" "Where do you get your tears?" was the answer After a thoughtful silence, in which the mention of tears had evidently recalled certain associations, he again broke out, "Mamma, *do the cows have to be spanked?*"—On seeing a house being whitewashed, a small boy of three wanted to know if the house was going to be shaved.—"Do you know how I get into bed so quick, mamma?" said a little girl.—"No, darling; how do you?" was the reply.—"Why, I put one foot on the bed, and then holler out 'Rats!' and scare myself right in."—A lady, when admiring the stars on a bright night in a tropical climate, was suddenly asked in the most innocent way by her little son of five years old if those were the nails that held up heaven.

Apt replies of little people when scolded or questioned find many illustrations as, for example, when a little girl, after being sharply reproved by her mother for some misconduct, said after a moment's pause, "I should fink, mamma, from the way you treat me, you was my step-movver."—A four-year-old boy lying in a bed in which his brother was also to sleep, replied, when his mother exclaimed: "Why, Tommy, you are lying right in the middle of the bed; what will poor Harry do?" "Well, mother, Harry has got both sides."—Another youngster of about the same age, seated at the tea-table, said: "Mamma, may I have some sardines?" "Wait till I'm ready, child." "Why, Ma, it's me 'at wants 'em," was the comment, in tones of surprise.—A boy who had always refused to eat oatmeal, in spite of his mother's urgings that it was a strengthening diet, suddenly surprised her one morning by eating a liberal plateful and calling for more. Upon his mother asking for an explanation, he replied, "I am bound to eat oatmeal till I am strong enough to whip Johnny Scott."

Little Freddie, when visiting a neighbour's house, was offered a piece of bread-and-butter, which he accepted, but without any show of gratitude. "What do you say, Freddie?" hinted the lady, expecting him to say "Thank you." "I say it ain't cake," was the impolite response.—The father of a family, after reading from the morning paper that the cold the night before was intense, the thermometer registering many degrees below freezing point, said: "Now, children, I suppose you are taught all about that at school. Which of you can tell me what the freezing-point is?" "The point of my nose, papa," was the prompt reply from one of the youngsters.

A gentleman somewhat advanced in life, and who was never remarkable for his good looks, asked his grandchild what he thought of him. The boy's parents were present. The youngster made no reply. "Well, why won't you tell me what you think of me?" "'Cause I don't want to get licked," was the answer.—An American mother, who fondly put the query to her young son, "What would you do without a mother, Tom?" was dumbfounded with the reply: "Do as I liked, Ma."—A mother once showed her child a beautiful doll, a St. John, of fine make and colour. "See," she said, "he has been very good, and heaven always rewards the good by making them beautiful." "Oh," said the child, lifting its shoulders, "don't believe that, mamma. This little St. John looks very meek because he's all glued up; but if he could only move, you'd see!"

A little girl one morning remarked to her mamma that her "button-shoes were hurting;" and probably thought relief might come by changing right to left. "Why, Lucy, you've put them on the wrong feet!" Puzzled and just ready to cry, she exclaimed: "What'll I do, mamma. They're all the feet I've got!"—An affectionate mother noticing her little daughter wipe her mouth with her dress sleeve, asked what her handkerchief was for, and received for answer: "It's to shake at the ladies in the street; that's what papa does with his."

Children's remarks are at times even more entertaining than their comical queries and replies.

One of two children who were amusing themselves by colouring pictures, suddenly exclaimed, "Well, how stupid of me to paint that cow blue!" "Oh, it's blue with the cold!" quickly observed the other. A little girl on being told something which greatly amused her, vowed that "she would remember it the whole of her life, and when she forgot it would write it down." A canary had begun to twitter a little after moulting, but was unable to sing its entire tune. A little four-year-old, after listening to one of the bird's vain attempts to master his tune, said very composedly, "Mamma, birdie only sang half a verse." Canaries bring to mind their enemies the cats. A gentleman had a cat which gave birth to five kittens. On ordering three of them to be drowned, his little boy said, "Pa, do not drown them in cold water. Warm it first; they may catch cold before they are dead."

The following remark of a little girl shows an opinion of her elders the reverse of flattering. "O dear!" she exclaimed to her doll, "I do wish you would sit still. I never saw such an uneasy thing in all my life. Why don't you act like grown folks, and be still and stupid for a while?" In contrast to this was the delicate compliment paid by an American boy to his mother. The family were discussing at the supper-table the qualities which go to make up the good wife. Nobody thought the little fellow had been listening or could understand the talk, until he leaned over the table and kissed his mother, and said, "Mamma, when I get big enough, I'm going to marry a lady just like you."

## Investments for Old Age.

Among the hoard of wordly maxims on the lips of the old, none are more frequently uttered than exhortations to thrift and economy. "It is the duty of all persons to economise their means," says Dr. Smiles. "Thrift not only works for to-day but provides for to-morrow." Excellent maxims truly, but why do our sage advisers confine themselves to the use and abuse of money? Is there no other provision to be made for old age beyond caring for the needs of the body? The fable of the ant and the grasshopper usually brought forward as an awful example to the pleasure lover may be read in another way. To the ant, who has spent his summer in continuous labour, winter presents itself as the season merely of rest and enjoyment. He has a snug home and plenty to eat; that is the sum total of his possessions. No pleasant memories, no friendly intercourse brighten his days, while his reception of the grasshopper reveals a most unamiable temper. The grasshoper truly is in sad plight enough, but he can say of his life that, if it were short, it was merry. Looking back and enjoying his happy recollections, he may forget the miseries of the present, and be reconciled to his speedy departure from an untoward time.

What about the human ants? They do not spend more than is absolutely necessary; they carefully put by every penny saved for the future; and as men usually reap what they sow, they find themselves in old age with a snug competence. So far so good; but that is not enough. The money has been fairly and honestly earned; they have every right to fully enjoy it. But do they? In order to obtain this fortune they have worked hard all their days, have denied themselves relaxation, amusement, culture, friendship. Now in retiring from business they have nothing within themselves to fall back upon. Such men are to be found everywhere. Too old to start any fresh interest, they wander about the streets, and potter up and down their gardens aimlessly. They have always been too busy to take any part in public life, and now it is too late to begin. They have never read anything beyond the daily papers, and never had time to pursue a hobby. What shall such men do with their money? They can live in comfortable houses, and keep a comfortable table, but even so they can hardly be said to enjoy themselves. They have lost the art of living, or, worse still, they have never acquired it.

There is another sort of provision to be made for old age, and another kind of economy to be practised. The man who at the beginning of life resolves to earn more than he spends does well; he who puts by for the future is acting wisely; but this is only the foundation of wisdom. He must so spend his money that each year he may enlarge his experience and lay up a store of beautiful memories.

It is of no use to say "When I am rich I will travel; when I retire from business I will study this science;" because the desire will have perished before that happy day arrives.

How can we accumulate pleasant memories; Largely by travel; and the kind of travel will depend on the length of the purse and the amount of leisure. Happily, however, the enjoyment to be derived does not depend on either. One man will explore his own neighbourhood with more profit than another will derive from running over Europe. Thrift is exercised by managing best the available resources; by choosing just those expeditions that will store up pleasure for the future. Every year that does not add to our knowledge of beautiful scenery and famous buildings is a lost year. Besides these let us place the witnessing great ceremonies and becoming acquainted with notable people. Twenty years hence how shall we regret not having witnessed the Jubilee procession! Even now how great the satisfaction of being able to say "When I heard John Bright speak," or "When I shook hands with Lord Beaconsfield."

Let us consider the domain of pleasure. Our model man never wastes his money on amusement; he never heard Patti sing nor enjoyed a Wagner opera. He "reads his Shakespeare at home," and so has never seen Irving impersonate the *Jew*, or Robertson play *Hamlet*. But we intend to con our Shakespeare in old age, with its pages illumined by remembrances of great actors and actresses. If deafness comes upon us, we shall still be able to recall the music of the past.

These are delights for the eye and ear; but there are others. The world of books requires an article to itself. Here too, as in the world of pleasure, let us have a care that we are laying up stores for the future; let not our reading or amusement be for the moment only. The choice is so varied, the risk of misuse so great, that we must ask ourselves constantly, "Will this make for pleasure in old age? Is it a thrifty investment of time?" One great charm of books is that, in late life, when travel is impossible and amusements pall, they may still be enjoyed and loved.

This leads to another point. The busy man intent on saving money has no time for friendship; for be it observed that to keep friends is no easy matter; we may make friends quickly enough, but to retain them requires time, self-denial—nay, even money. But there is no better investment to be made; nothing among an old man's possessions can be more valuable than the friends of his youth. Dr. Johnson said that the man was a fool who did not cultivate his friends. It is this cultivation that is the point. It is a troublesome thing, not to be undertaken by the busy man, for above all things it requires leisure. But it is worth doing nevertheless.

The day will come when we shall hope to leave business, to enjoy an easy leisure; to retire with some strength of mind and body. How are we to fill the time? Not only with books and friends and pleasant memories. Is there no work begun in earlier life that can still be carried on? Hobbies there are of all kinds, and singular is the man who does not own one; but beyond these is there nothing? Have we taken some share in the business of our town? Have we interested ourselves in some philanthropic or religious work? Our part, perhaps, has been small, but still our interest has been real. Now, in later life, with abundant leisure and larger experience, we can take a larger share. The wise schoolmaster carefully lays the foundation of sciences that cannot be mastered in school life, knowing that, once the preliminary difficulties are conquered, the subject can be taken up later and pursued with advantage. So let it be with us: in active life start the beginnings of business that may interest and employ later years, realising that it is easier to carry on work than to begin it afresh.

Then as each year ends, when we have made up the balance-sheet of gains and losses, and ascertained our monetary position, let us also sum up the moral and intellectual gains of the past twelve months. He only is prepared rightly for old age who takes account of these things as well as of his bank-book.

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As for the fruit toward those that are within, it is peace, which containeth infinite blessings; it establisheth faith, it kindleth charity; the outward peace of the church distilleth into peace of conscience.—*Bacon.*

## Thoughts for Quiet Moments.

Too late have I known Thee, O Eternal Truth! Too late have I loved Thee, O Eternal Beauty! Too long have I gone astray from Thee! From this moment, O my Sovereign Good, I desire to be for ever Thine!—*St. Augustine.*

When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart, and remember, emphatically, either prayer will make thee cease from sin, or sin will certainly entice thee to cease from prayer.—*John Bunyan.*

Humility is the source of all true greatness; pride is ever impatient, ready to be offended.—*Fenelon.*

Man must work as if God does nothing; man must trust as if God does everything.—*Dr. Chalmers.*

Cultivate the spirit of prayer. I do not mean agitation and excitement, but a deep desire for goodness, and you will daily learn how near God is to every one of us.—*Margaret Fuller.*

Time does not make us stronger, but it may make us better in many ways. Time brings all good things, even when it brings death.—*Sir William Gull, M.D.*

If the kingdom of heaven is merely a future kingdom, reserved in some distant star for some happy individuals, rulers or people have a right to declare that it is no concern of theirs. If it is an eternal kingdom, by which all the acts of monarchs, nobles, clergymen, shopkeepers, beggars are governed and judged, it will make its power felt though all Churchmen, Conformists and Nonconformists, Conservatives and Liberals, agree to break its bonds asunder, and to cast away its cords from them.—*F. D. Maurice.*

A man's life is not what he reads, or what he thinks, but what his inclinations and aspirations are; in fine, what his inner life is. . . . . The nearer I approach to the end of life the more I am impressed with the spiritual nature of things. It is the sensuality of our nature which restricts and hinders our clearer view.—*Sir William Gull, M.D.*

Such strange things are found in the Bible that we are not without hope of the discovery of Christianity there one of these days.—*J. Russell Lowell.*

Her face was smirched and spoiled by our cruelty and neglect and apathy, not by any sins of her own, poor child! Since she ceased to work she has grown daily more beautiful—and now she is dead. As the doctor said, what better thing could befall her? Oh! Claude, we have been Christians for nearly two thousand years, and yet we can say still that the best thing for thousands among us is to die. Are we Christians? Have we, even yet, begun to understand what Christianity means.—*Sir Walter Besant.*

That is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the only Holy or Mother Church which ever was, or ever shall be.—*John Ruskin.*

How many hopes were raised when the people woke up which are now killed; hopes of liberty, free work, life and living progress, which have all passed into the shadow of death under the dead hand. The nation woke up. But there is an evil worse than sleep. Better to sleep than awake and make a noise about truth, and find truth troublesome and dangerous, and shut the door in her face, and sit down with all the self satisfaction of the infallible and rejoice — with everything finished before anything is begun.—*Edward Thring.*

As we grow old it is our fate to lose our friends, but the friends we have lost are often nearer to us than those who remain. Will they never be quite near to us again? Stars meet stars after thousands of years, and are we not of more value than many stars?—*F. Max Muller.*

The race ever rises toward God. The old things which were once its best die off from it as no longer good. Its charity grows, its justice grows. All the nobler, finer elements of its spirit come forth more and more. And the better the world the larger its knowledge and the easier its faith in Him who made it and who leads it on. The development of man is itself the great revelation of God.—*From "The Increasing Purpose," by J. Lane Allen.*

# THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

## First Time at Church.

A grave sweet wonder in the baby face
And look of mingled dignity and grace,
Such as a painter's hand might love to trace.

A pair of trusting innocent blue eyes,
That higher than the stained-glass window rise,
Into the fair and cloudless summer skies.

The people round her sing, "Above the sky
There's rest for little children when they die,"—
To her—thus gazing up—that rest seems nigh.

The organ peals: she must not look around,
Although with wonderment her pulses bound—
The place whereon she stands is holy ground.

The sermon over, and the blessing said,
She bows—as "mother" does—her golden head;
And thinks of little sister who is dead.

She knows that now she dwells above the sky,
Where holy children enter when they die,
And prays God take her there too, by-and-by.

Pet, may He keep you in the faith alway,
And bring you to that home for which you pray,
Where all shall have their child-hearts back one day!

SOPHIE A. M. JAMES.

## The Land of Nod.

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay;
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the Land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do—
All alone beside the streams,
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the Land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

R. L. STEVENSON.

## Carrier Pigeon.

One day a carrier pigeon tapped at the window of Mrs. Nansen's home at Christiania. Instantly the window was opened, and the wife of the famous arctic explorer in another moment covered the little messenger with kisses and caresses.

The carrier pigeon had been away from the cottage *thirty long months*, but *had not forgotten the way home.* It brought a note from Nansen, stating that all was going well with his expedition in the polar regions.

Nansen had fastened a message to the bird, and turned it loose.

The frail courier darted out into the blizzardly air, flew like an arrow over *perhaps a thousand miles of frozen waste*, and then *over another thousand miles of ocean and plains and forests*, to enter the window of its waiting mistress, and deliver the message which she had been awaiting so anxiously.

We boast of human pluck, sagacity, and endurance; but this loving carrier pigeon, after an absence of thirty months, accomplished a feat so wonderful that we can only give ourselves up to amazement and admiration.—*From Nansen's Arctic Explorations.*

## The Boyless Town.

A cross old woman of long ago
Declared that she hated noise:
"The town would be so pleasant, you know,
If only there were no boys."
She scolded and fretted about it till
Her eyes grew heavy as lead;
And then of a sudden the town grew still,
For all the boys had fled.

And all through the long and dusty street
There wasn't a boy in view:
The base-ball lot where they used to meet
Was a sight to make one blue.
The grass was growing on every base
And the paths that the runners made;
For there wasn't a soul in all the place
Who knew how the game was played.

The dogs were sleeping the livelong day:
Why should they bark or leap?
There wasn't a whistle or call to play,
And so they could only sleep.
The pony neighed from his lonely stall,
And longed for saddle and rein;
And even the birds on the garden wall
Chirped only a dull refrain.

The cherries rotted and went to waste,—
There was no one to climb the trees;
And nobody had a single taste
Save only the birds and bees.
There wasn't a messenger boy,—not one
To speed as such messengers can:
If people wanted their errands done,
They sent for a messenger-man.

There was little, I ween, of frolic and noise,
There was less of cheer and mirth:
The sad old town, since it lacked its boys,
Was the dreariest place on earth.
The poor old woman began to weep,
Then woke with a sudden scream,
"Dear me," she cried: "I have been asleep;
And, oh, what a horrid dream!"

—ROBERT CLARKSON TONGUE.